ACT IV.

Enter CHORUS.

CHOIR. Now entertain conjecture of a time,
When creeping murmur, and the poring dark,
Fills the wide vessel of the universe[6].
From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds[7],
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch[8]:

[6] Fills the wide vessel of the UNIVERSE.] *Universe* for *horizon*: for we are not to think Shakspeare so ignorant as to imagine it was night over the whole globe at once. He intimates he knew otherwise by that fine line in A Midsummer-Night's Dream:

"—following darkness like a dream."

Besides, the image he employs shows he meant but half the globe: the horizon round, which has the shape of a vessel or goblet. WARBURTON.

There is a better proof that Shakspeare knew the order of night and day in Macbeth:

"Now o'er the *one half world*
"Nature seems dead."

But there was no great need of any justification. The *universe*, in its original sense, no more means this globe singly than the circuit of the horizon: but, however large in its philosophical sense, it may be poetically used for as much of the world as falls under observation. Let me remark further, that ignorance cannot be certainly inferred from inaccuracy. Knowledge is not always present. JOHNSON.

[7] —STILLY sounds.] A similar idea perhaps was meant to be given by Barnaby Googe, in his version of Palingenius, 1561:

"Which with a pleasaunt *huskyng sound*
"Provok'd the joves of bed."

Saepe levi *spmnum* suadebit inire *$u$urro»*
Virg. Ecl. i. 56.
STEEVENS.

"— *stilly* sounds," i. e. gently, lowly. So, in the sacred writings: "a *Ml* snpall voice." MALONE.

[8] The secret whispers of each other's watch.] Holinshed says, that the distance between the two

armies was but two
hundred and fifty paces. MALONE»